

# Holiday Gifts for You And Your Boat

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*By Jim H Starr, JN – Cape Lookout Sail & Power Squadron*

Rob Skrotsky's presentation "What's In Your Ditch Bag?" at the November dinner meeting got me thinking about boating preparation and safety. Here are some books and products that can help out in making our time on the water safer and more convenient.

*Nautical Reference Guides*, \$15 and up. As Rob pointed out in his talk, Landfall Navigation ([www.landfallnavigation.com](http://www.landfallnavigation.com)) sells a wealth of safety equipment, including books and guides to get you prepared for emergencies and to help get you through them. Check out the Landfall website for books on first aid/medicine, handling storms, knots, weather, navigation, etc. They also sell all the equipment you may need to implement the strategies in the books.

*Smartphone/Tablet Nautical Apps*, \$1 and up. As smartphones and tablets have become more common in our lives, the number of nautical apps has exploded. Many of the books referred to above are available in electronic form from your favorite online book dealer. There are very capable chart plotter apps available for most platforms (iOS, Android, Windows, etc.) that can serve as valuable backups on board. There are also many useful weather apps, knot references, rules of the road references, and so forth. Check the recent reviews in the sailing magazines and pick out the ones you need.

*Speedseal Life*, \$89. Keeping you boat's engine cool is essential to keeping running. Have you ever started to replace an impeller, only to find that a number of its vanes were missing because you'd put off the change? Or maybe had an impeller fail because your cooling water intake became fouled? Speedseal is a British company that deals with those problems by making your impeller very easy to change, and virtually eliminating impeller failure because of the absence of lubricating water. Check them out at [www.speedseal.com/SpeedsealLife/SpeedsealLife.html](http://www.speedseal.com/SpeedsealLife/SpeedsealLife.html)

*Nature's Head Composting Toilet*, \$875. How about the convenience of never having to pump out you holding tank again, because you don't have one? No head plumbing to clog? No flapper valves to rebuild? One less through-hull? Enter the Nature's Head Composting Toilet. Liquid wastes are separated and can be emptied in a toilet ashore; solid waste becomes compost. Several of our members have converted to these toilets on board, and are delighted with them. Our local dealer is Below The Deck in Oriental. Get more information from them at <http://www.belowthedeck.com>